

"They would have to ask for it," he said. "I could certainly see us saying, 'Yeah, makes sense.'"

He emphasized, however, that no such decision had been made.

White House officials said that Crocker's comments were consistent with it previously stated position.

"The president never excluded the possibility that there would be some U.S. forces here, but he stressed that security would be under Afghan lead by 2014," said Eileen O'Connor, the embassy spokeswoman.

Crocker's comments came as the administration is engaged in discussions with the Afghan government on what arrangements should be after 2014. At a conference in Bonn, Germany, last week, President Hamid Karzai and other Afghan officials called for political and military support for at least another decade.

U.S. DEATHS

The Department of Defense recently confirmed the deaths of these American military personnel:

Sgt. 1st Class Clark A. Corley Jr., 35, of Oxnard, Calif., Spc. Ryan M. Lumley, 21, of Lakeland, Fla., and Spc. Thomas J. Mayberry, 21, of Springville, Calif., died Dec. 3, in Wardak province, Afghanistan, of wound suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit with an improvised explosive device. They were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Sgt. Ryan D. Sharp, 28, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, died Dec. 3, at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany, of wounds suffered Nov. 21 at Kandahar province, when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan.

JEAN BONNEY SMITH,
1550 E. HOLLY STREET,
Boise, ID, October 25, 2011.

To: Rep. WALTER JONES
Re Your "General Speech" This morning

You were excellent on the House floor this morning, regarding ENDING THE WARS!

Everything you said made perfect sense—Things I have been thinking for 2 or 3 years, too! Karzai's most recent remarks were just the last slap in our face!

How can you convince your fellow Republicans of these truths?

We can't just stay on this "War Inc.," course, *waiting for the next election*—it is criminal to our troops.

Thank you,

JEAN B. SMITH.

AMERICA'S UNSUSTAINABLE PATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. One thing that most of the Occupy Wall Street protesters and the majority of the Tea Party advocates agree upon is that the United States is not on a sustainable path.

The economy is still floundering. We are in too many cases losing the competition to other countries in things like building, maintaining our infrastructure for the future and in keeping up with the advances of education. We have the world's most expensive health care system that leaves too many peo-

ple without coverage and provides the Nation overall with mediocre results.

Americans get sick more often, take longer to get well, and die sooner than most of our European competitors; and half that cost is loaded on the backs of the employers and embedded in the prices of their products.

But perhaps the most glaring example of unsustainability is not our health care system or our tax system; it is the massive defense and security spending with escalating costs, which is, sadly, not strategically oriented.

We cannot continue to spend almost as much as the rest of the world, friend and foe alike, combined. Our military was stressed, and continues to be hobbled by the reckless action in Iraq and further challenged by the war in Afghanistan. Yet we have a defense reauthorization that we will be considering on the floor today that ignores the big picture, does not lay the foundation for a dramatic scaling back of open-ended spending commitments, especially in dealing with issues like a nuclear weapons system far more expensive and out of proportion to what we will ever need or use. There are patterns of deployment that cry out for reform.

There are long overdue elements to deal with cost-effectiveness and the environmental footprint. Energy costs of \$400 a gallon for fuel to the front, billions of dollars just for air-conditioning are symbols of a system that is not sustainable. We need key improvements. Unfortunately, we're on a path of trying to do more than we can or that we should do.

The greatest threat to our future is losing control of our ability to sustain the military because we can't sustain the economy. Unlike the past, we feel now that we don't have enough money to train and educate our next generation. It is a problem now that American infrastructure is not keeping pace with the demands of our communities, let alone the global economy.

We should reject this blueprint. We should begin the process now of right-sizing the military, of getting rid of the burdensome nuclear overreach and patterns from the past—spending on things that would help us with the Cold War or World War II, maybe even do a slightly better job on the misguided mission in Iraq—but not the most pressing challenges for American security in this century.

We have the most powerful military in the world and will, by far, even if we invest substantially less. Our problem is that the American public is being ill-served by a government that is not investing in our future and in an economy that will not be able to sustain ever-increasing military commitments, to say nothing of the demands of investing in our communities and our people, especially the young.

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I was, from the beginning, appalled at the burden we were asking of our young men and women to bear when we

put them in the reckless Iraq adventure. People who are in the front deserve our best in terms of equipment and facilities. They and their families need to be well cared for, not just in the field but when they come home. We can do this, even in difficult times, if we get our priorities right. And we can get our priorities straight and the job done with less money.

The cuts initiated by Secretary Gates and the Obama administration, plus what would be required by sequestration, would only bring our defense establishment to the level of 2007, adjusted for inflation. There is no question that over the next 10 years, we can manage that transition and that we will have to do it. What is sad is that the bill we will be considering today doesn't make the progress we need to get us there.

A TRIBUTE TO PHYLLIS CAUSEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great friend and a remarkable Kentuckian, Mrs. Phyllis Causey. In January, after 39 years of honorable and selfless public service, she will retire.

Her Lewisburg High School yearbook in 1968 contained a prophecy for her, saying, "Phyllis will be in President Nixon's Cabinet in 10 years." And although President Nixon resigned while she was at basic training for the Army Reserve in '74 and she never did make it to the White House, lucky for us, she still decided to follow her passion for politics and public service.

Phyllis graduated from Hopkinsville Community College in 1970 and received her bachelor's degree from Western Kentucky University in 1972. Upon her graduation, Phyllis worked for WKU for the following 23 years.

In 1995, she was hired as a field representative for Congressman Ron Lewis. And when I was elected to replace Congressman Lewis upon his retirement, Phyllis was kind enough to continue working for me.

While traveling as a candidate for Congress, I met so many individuals whose first question to me was, Are you going to keep Phyllis if you are elected? Their question was a testament to Phyllis' compassion, hard work, and dedication to the individuals in the counties she served. She was and still is irreplaceable.

Phyllis grew up on a farm in Logan County, where her parents taught her the value of hard work and the importance of giving and caring for others. And throughout the nearly 20 years I have known Phyllis, she has exemplified these values every day. She has been such an inspiration to me, and she has always been devoted to the causes she believes in—church, family, and friends.

Phyllis is an incredible wife, daughter, sister, and mother. I know her